GENERAL CHARLES DOUGLAS HERRON

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

General Charles Douglas Herron

(1877 - 1977)

General Herron, the son of a banker who had been a captain during the Civil War, was born in Indiana. William Parke Herron had hoped his son would succeed him in the banking business, but was pleased when he accepted an appointment to West Point Military Academy.

After graduating from West Point in 1899, Second Lieutenant Herron went to the Philippines to serve in the war there, stopping off in Hawaii enroute. In 1903, he received into his division a new West Point graduate, Douglas MacArthur.

In 1936, Major General Herron returned to Hawaii to take over the command of Schofield Barracks, and the following year became commander at Fort Shafter.

In March 1941, at the age of sixty-four, General Herron turned over command of the United States Army in Hawaii to Lieutenant General Walter D. Short. He then went to Washington, D.C. to serve as a personnel officer in the War Department under General George C. Marshall, chief of staff.

General Herron reminisces about his military career, the famous generals and many prominent Island leaders he has known; and expresses opinions about the situation in Hawaii on December 7, 1941.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL CHARLES DOUGLAS HERRON

At his Arcadia apartment, 1434 Punahou Street, Honolulu 96822

Late in 1971

H: General Charles Douglas Herron

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

M: Can I start with getting your full, correct name?

H: Charles Douglas Herron.

M: Okay. And where were you born?

H: Indiana.

M: What were your parents' names?

H: William Parke Herron and Ada Patton Herron.

M: Was your mother any relation to the famous general [George S. Patton]?

H: No. My father was in the Civil War, though.

M: Your father was also in the Army, then.

H: No, he was a volunteer.

M: Oh, I see.

H: He must have been a presentable young fellow because in those days when they were all volunteers in the beginning and when the President [Abraham Lincoln] called for three hundred thousand volunteers, why, he was one of them to step front and center. This was, I thought, interesting: in order to get the adherence of the governors, they had to let the governors appoint the officers, so when the day came they had all these men and no officers. A hard-boiled regular came around to muster them in and he divided them up into groups and I guess my father must have been a promising young fellow because he appointed him first sergeant right away, put his finger on him and said, "You're in charge." There were, I think, sixty-five men

in a company in those days, so he was put in charge of this company and the officers came along later. He went off to war with that company and came back in due time as the captain of it, so I guess he was good material.

M: Uh huh.

H: Pardon me.

M: That's okay, go ahead.

H: That what you want?

M: Uh huh.

H: He went off to the Civil War and served four years and came back as captain of his company. In the meantime, the governor had appointed the different officers but they fell by the wayside and he came back.

Do you want all this history?

M: Yeh, right.

H: (explains occasional stuttering) I'm in the throes of the aftereffects of an eye operation. I've been operated on for one eye, I've got the other one coming up, and it hit me hard. I had no trouble of any kind until I had this eye operation. It's kind of affected me all over, so I stutter a little bit probably. And I've got the other one coming up on the twenty-third of this month. [See p. 29]

But anyway, he was a small-town banker after the war and he wanted me to succeed him but the congressman offered me an appointment to West Point and he was pleased to have a boy in the Army. So he came in one Sunday afternoon and asked me if I wanted to go to West Point. Well, I had never considered the Army or West Point and didn't know anything about it, but the congressman had offered him the appointment if he would run for mayor of the town. He was a very popular man. That came out later. But anyway, I thought quite rapidly and I thought, "Now if I take this, I can slip out along the way later if I don't like it. If I say no, it's all over." So in about forty seconds I said, "Yes," and here I am. So that's the answer.

M: So you went to West Point.

H: I went to West Point and I came this way [to Hawaii] first in 1899 on my way to the Philippines when we stopped over a week while we took on coal.

M: You were through at West Point then.

H: I had graduated.

M: What year?

H: Eighteen ninety-nine [1899].

M: You graduated in 1899.

H: I graduated in 1899. I was on my way to the Philippines and they stopped here to take on coal and I got off the boat and went to the one hotel in town which was down where the old YMCA was, down near the waterfront. I think they pulled it down recently, just quite recently. It was a frame building with screened porches and the mosquitoes burrowed all the way through. The shower baths were full of mosquitoes, but I stayed there while they took on coal and then went on to the Philippines.

M: What did you think of Honolulu at that time?

H: Oh, we liked it very much. We walked up the middle of the street in those days; nobody ran us down. Fort Street was as wide as from here to that wall, I suppose, and the sidewalks were about that wide, quite narrow, but nobody used them very much. We walked up the middle of the street. I remember that.

And I remember seeing a good many big Hawaiians, men and women, barefooted walking up the street and, completely eager, walking in a store. There were no taxicabs. The street was dusty and I don't think there were any buildings in town bigger than two stories. Some had an extension on the roof--a pretend third story. It was common to the West, you know, to build a two-story building and then a frame like a false front for the third story up, and they had that kind of a thing. I don't remember anything taller than that, although when I came back five years later the Young Hotel was built.

M: Um hm. That made a big . . .

H: They had a Roof Garden and an orchestra that played and they danced there at night. It was the first time I'd heard an orchestra play and sing at the same time and I was fascinated by it.

M: How do you mean, play and sing at the same time?

H: They sang while they played. They had lots of good voices and no one was being exported to the Mainland then and

while they played they sang. I was quite fascinated by that. I went up and watched them. I didn't dance because I didn't know anybody. It seems to me that at that time it was against the law to dance the hula because, as I remember, unsavory characters would come to your door and say, "Would you want to see the hula?" If you said yes, they'd come back about ten o'clock and take you out to some place and some woman would dance the Egyptian belly dance they'd seen at the World's Fair. (Lynda laughs) That was their hula, you know.

M: Oh really? You didn't see the real hula then?

H: Oh no. Some other dance. I'd been to the World's Fair and I recognized that as the Egyptian belly dance they put on. It was against the law to dance the hula then. That's when I came back from the Philippines.

M: Were people friendly to army officers like yourself?

H: Oh, very. Yes. I think it was the first time that I met Walter [Francis] Dillingham. He was on the Governor's Guard. They had high shiny boots up to here--stayed boots you know--and gauntlets up to here, and they were having their pictures taken on the steps of the [Iolani] Palace. I've forgotten the other man's name. He was always very friendly, the other man. I got to know Walter very well over the years when I came back here at different times.

M: Walter would have been what, about twenty-five or thirty then, huh?

H: Let's see. He was, I suppose, not much older than I was if any. He was a young fellow.

M: What was the Governor's Guard? What was that supposed to be, just a show?

H: It was a show thing, you know. They had it in the Hawaiian days. You see, in 1899 I think the present government was only a year old. I think it started in 1898 [with annexation].

M: Yeh, right.

H: And so they had this Governor's Guard and they had these high gauntlets and these high shiny boots. I'm sorry I've forgotten the other man's name because I came to know him very well over the years. He died three or four years ago, as did Walter. Walter died in--well, I can't tell you. I'm sorry to say that this operation hit me hard--my

memory for names. You ask me anybody's name, well, I don't know it right away. And I can't tell you just when Walter died. His wife died the same year.

M: Yeh. It was about 1960 I think.

H: Was it?

M: Yeh.

H: Well, I was here that year and he and his wife both died just about that same time and I missed them. I want to say one thing while we discuss Walter. I was back here just before Pearl Harbor [December 7, 1941]. In fact, I was the man who turned the place over to the unfortunate [Lieutenant General] Walter [D.] Short and they had lots of business with Walter--army business. In those days we did lots of shipping on the little railroad. He was a square shooter with the government. I never saw the slightest instance of his trying to skin the government out of a penny. He was a hard fighter, you know, with the rest of them. He fought the Big Five. He'd take them on single-handed or all five of them at any time and he was a tough customer, I guess, but not with the government. He never skinned the government out of a penny. I was a good friend but it was my business to watch him and I did watch him all the time.

M: Were you invited into private homes when you were here?

H: Oh yes, right away.

M: Can you remember anything about those or the people?

H: Oh, no, but I have around here someplace, although I can't find it right now, a list of people that were invited to my daughter's wedding and they would be the people that we knew. I'll have to try to think and see just where it is. That would be the list of people that we knew socially. I don't remember just where things are. (phone rings) Excuse me.

M: Yeh, uh huh. (recorder turned off and on again)

H: I have that list around here someplace.

M: Can you remember, how did the people entertain you? Did they have servants and did they dance in their own homes or how did they entertain you?

H: Well, they'd invite you to dinner and you went to their

houses, and then we invited them to dinner. Let's see. We didn't invite them to dinner until I came back in command, I suppose.

See, I went through here on my way to the Philippines. I had three tours in the Philippines, then I came back in 1936 in command, first at Schofield [Barracks] and then at [Fort] Shafter. The first people to call on us were Frank [E.] and Ruth [Richards] Midkiff. They were the very first. A number of people came up there--it was customary in those days--and called on us, but they were the first people and they invited us to their house to dinner and we invited them back up to our place. We had servants all right. I know at Shafter we had a Chinese cook and two houseboys. I remember that because every once in awhile he would go on the warpath with a big knife and the houseboys would take to the woods. (Lynda laughs) But how many we had up at Schofield I don't remember now. We always had servants. Everybody had servants. I had a Chinese cook and Hawaiian houseboys. [See p. 29]

M: I see. So from 1904--1905 you came back here.

H: Wait a minute now. I went to the Philippines and I didn't come back for duty here until 1928. I came back as chief of staff, I guess, of the division. [General] Douglas MacArthur was here then. No, wait a minute now. I get mixed up with the Philippines. I came back again in 1903 because that's the year MacArthur graduated from West Point and he came right out there and came to my post. By that time I was a veteran of the war. See, the Philippine war was on in 1901 when I came out and I took him in. At that time I had a grass shack of my own because I was a veteran of the war and I took him in, so we became quite friends. He lived with me at that post.

M: This was in the Philippines, you're talking about.

H: This was in the Philippines. I was just trying to straighten it out. I came back to the Philippines later in 1928 as his chief of staff. He was in command there. That's it. I came back here in 1936 in command of Schofield. That's straight. All right.

M: What was your title?

H: I was a major general by that time. Then I came down here after about a year and was in command of the whole place--command of all the islands in 1937. I stayed here until March of 1941 when I got to be sixty-four and that made me too old for the command of troops, so I went back to Washington. As soon as I got back there I was put on duty in

the War Department on a special job in connection with personnel. I'd always been interested in personnel and I went in there as special assistant to the chief of staff.

M: Who was the chief of staff then?

H: General George [Catlett] Marshall. I'd always been interested in seeing the head of the military's ability to pick out the best man and get rid of the poor man, but the Army, of course, is based on loyalty. The result is that if a colonel had a command in those days they had a lieutenant colonel and for three battalions they had three majors. Well, he couldn't bear to give them anything but a fine rating, so when the war came on we had four thousand colonels, all rated tops. They were just the best in the world.

So when I got back there and the war came on, we needed right away four hundred new generals. We had two thousand colonels out of the four thousand rated tops, so the job was to pick out the highly rated ones who really were tops. As I had been interested in that, picking out the top man, I was immediately put on a small committee of four men to pick out the four hundred generals. That was my first job when I was there. That's what I was doing in the office of the chief of staff.

Marshall and I had been in school together as younger fellows. He knew me quite well. He had the delusion that I was honest and would not spare my friends or punish my enemies. He was a very honest man himself. He was a great man, Marshall was. And so, I was one of the men who picked out the first hundred officers for the war [World War II].

M: Did you pick the man that took over here?

H: Oh yes. Yes. I hope you don't put that in. (Lynda laughs) No, wait a minute. He was an Air Corps man, Evans, and he came up through selection. He was already on the way. [General Henry H.] Arnold was also on the way up. I didn't pick him because he was already a general when the war came on. I didn't pick Arnold.

The Air Corps then, when the war came on, was part of the Army--it was part of my command when I was here--and Arnold and Marshall got along very well together. And when the war came on the Air Corps didn't have any organization--any supply organization. They were interested in flying, they weren't interested in supplies, and it was too late to form a supply organization, so the Army had to take care of them during the war--feed them and supply them. And due to the fact that Marshall and Arnold were top men and could get along, they went through the war

that way, with the Army taking care of them in an administrative way. And then, when the war was over, they organized them entirely separately. The Air Corps became an entirely separate organization. Both Marshall and Arnold were understanding men.

M: What was the name of the man that took over when you left here?

H: General Walter Short. He held the bag when the Japanese came in and, of course, what happened to Walter Short was that he was surprised, and that's the unforgivable sin in the military--to be surprised. And then of course somebody said, "Hell hath no fury like a civilian in wartime," so they had to have blood when this place was surprised and they were out after Walter Short's blood because he was in command. His trouble was that he apparently didn't fully believe in this radar business. It was brand new then, you see, and it had come in after I left. I was already prepared for it but the instruments had not come. They were here at the time the Japanese came and they reported the approach of the fleet, but it didn't get to Short because he had not organized it to get the report. The first he knew was when they began to drop bombs. He should have had the first news when the first plane came within range of the radar when they were three hundred miles out, but he didn't get it; he hadn't organized for it. I don't know what was the matter with him, but the only people who got that were second lieutenants and sergeants--that the Japanese planes were on the way.

M: Um hm. Could you tell me some more about the years that you were here from 1936 to 1940?

H: Well, let's see. I came back--you see, MacArthur and I were together. I told you that when he graduated he came out of West Point in 1903 and I was in the Philippines and he came out there. MacArthur, I think, always had the feeling he was a man of destiny and his destiny lay in the Philippines. I knew these fellows, some of them, very well--MacArthur and [General Dwight David] Eisenhower and Marshall. I happened to know them well. They came to me when they were very young. But MacArthur had the feeling that he was a man of destiny and I never got his number a hundred percent. We were together over the years but he never told me all. The other people told me all, but not MacArthur.

What was it you asked me just now?

M: Could you tell me some more about the years you were here? You said you came back and took command at Schofield in

1936.

H: In 1936 and I stayed up there about a year until the man who was in command here then, whose name was Andrew Moses, till his tour was over. His predecessor was a man named Drum who was quite well known out here. Moses was not so well-known. Drum had gone away. Heh! Did you ever hear anything about Drum? (no audible response) All right. Drum was pretty well-known; he was quite an advertiser, but Moses was not the same type of man.

Now I took over for Moses and moved into Shafter. I was there two years. Then in March of 1941 I became sixty-four so I had to retire for age and went back to the States. As soon as I got there, General Marshall, who was then chief of staff, put me on active duty and took me in the War Department and put me on this job of working out something about . . . (long pause)

M: You said of working on personnel problems.

H: Personnel problems, because I had been over the years interested in seeing them picking out the right men out of a bunch of duds that got all the fine ratings, as I told you. They had to be loyal to each other, so most everybody got a fine rating. It's hard to pick out who really is a top man. So I'd been working on that and Marshall was interested in that. Well, I went directly into the War Department and I'm trying to think what I did immediately when I got there, what I was doing.

M: Well, I'd be more interested in hearing about your experiences here in Hawaii when you were up at Shafter.

H: Yes.

M: Can you tell me about any of the things that happened, people you knew in the military or out of the military, or any stories?

H: Oh yes, I said that the Midkiffs were the first people that came to see me.

M: How did you know the Midkiffs?

H: I didn't know them at all, they just came to call on us. I didn't know anybody, you see, but Frank and Ruth came to call on us right away so we got to know them right away. And other people came to call. I don't remember who they were. Wish I could remember just where that list is now. It would be invaluable to you because it was the people we invited to my daughter's wedding which occurred soon after

we got back. We sent announcements out. See, I'm nearly blind and I can't find things easily. I don't know where that list is but I know it's around. Well, I don't know who came besides the Midkiffs now, but we got to know people who were sociable. We got to know people in a hurry. We went to the Midkiffs' to dinner soon and other people invited us to their houses and we invited them to our house and more so when we got down here to Shafter. Let's see. I wonder what I've got here.

M: That's okay. That's okay.

H: All right, go ahead.

M: What kind of parties did you have at Shafter?

H: Well, people danced in those days and we had someplace where we danced. Oh, I've got a little something here I guess that I can put my hands on. (recorder turned off and on again)

M: Shall I just go down the list and pick out a few names for you to talk about?

H: Oh yes, that's fine. Pick out any of the names that you want to and ask me about them.

M: Okay. Yeh, okay.

H: Now wait a minute. I've got to telephone to my daughter. I'm having her to dinner today but I'm sure it's an evening dinner, not noon dinner. I want to be sure that I've not invited her for noon dinner.

M: Yeh. Okay. (recorder turned off and on again)

H: Frank Cooke Atherton was a kindly person. My first association with him was rather ridiculous. When we came here I had an old friend here, General Wells, who'd been in the Army. He'd been in command here and had impressed everybody very favorably and they asked him if he would take over the secretary's job of the sugar people's association [Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association] and he did and it was a great success. One of them told me they'd never known anybody to shift from one job to another so quickly and easily and efficiently as he did--Joe [Briant] Wells.

Well, they threw a party, I guess for us, as soon as we got here and I said to Wells, "I want to buy my wife an orchid. She's never had an orchid." He said he didn't know, he'd never bought his wife an orchid either. He said, "See Frank," who was across the room there, and he

could tell me where to buy an orchid. So I went over and saw Frank Atherton, not knowing he was the top orchid man in town, you know, but he didn't give me any dope. He talked for awhile. Well, the next morning he arrived with a shoebox full of orchids--white orchids for my wife--and we became fast friends from that time on.

He was very gentle, genial and friendly, and I got to know him quite well. He was a broad-minded man. He was broad-minded like Walter [Francis Dillingham] was, far-seeing and friendly and I admired him very much. This chapel here, I understand, was built not by him directly but by his relatives after he died in his memory. He did not leave the money for it [Atherton Chapel at Central Union Church]. But he was a broad-minded, far-seeing man like Walter.

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BEGINNING OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

M: Okay. Let us continue. I think we left off on Clark. Was it Henry Clark? (long pause) Well, let's pick up here with the Cleghorns. Do you remember anything about them?

H: Yes. You perhaps know that there were, I think, two Cleghorns came over here [Thomas and his son, Archibald S. Cleghorn] and one of them married into royalty. One of them [Archibald S.] married a royal princess [Princess Likelike]. A descendant of one of them wrote that book about the Islands.

M: Yeh.

H: You perhaps remember what her name was. I ought to know.

M: This one here is William Cleghorn.

H: Oh, I knew William, but there were two girls who lived over on the Island of Maui and one was wild as a hawk and trained the Baldwin polo ponies, and the other was an author who wrote a number of very good books about the Islands. Another one of that tribe married into the Army and we know her very well.

M: What was her name?

H: Her name was Aina W. Olsmith and she was the queen of the Kamehameha Day [parade] in 1938. She was a fine-looking girl and we had a magnificent big horse. Mrs. Herron was

quite a rider. She rode the big horse as queen of the Kamehameha Day. But they were not people of any particular importance when I was here. That's all about the Cleghorns. [See p. 29]

But this one girl that trained the Baldwin polo ponies was quite a character. That's all about them, I think, except the one who wrote the books. Born in Paradise was the principal one that she wrote. [Armine von Tempsky was the author. General Herron has evidently confused the Cleghorns with the von Tempskys.] Go ahead.

M: How about Mr. and Mrs. [Raymond S.] Coll? Coll. C-O-L-L.

H: I don't remember them. [Raymond S. Coll was editor of the Honolulu Advertiser for many years.]

M: Mr. and Mrs. C. Montague Cooke. Do you remember anything about them?

H: Nothing in particular, except they belonged to that powerful family.

M: Mr. and Mrs. J. Platt Cooke.

H: No. The only one of the Cookes that I remember particularly was the man who was the head of it--of the tribe--and he was the head of one of the Big Five and his wife, I think, was a social leader next to Mrs. Dillingham. But he was a powerful man financially. The whole Cooke family were powerful financially, but you'll find them all the way through. I can't tell you much about them that you could use.

M: Okay. Mr. and Mrs. James Cromwell.

H: No.

M: Crowley?

H: No.

M: Now here's Henry Clark. It says, "Son of my classmate."

H: Son of my classmate at West Point. The father of this man was a classmate and this boy here inherits many of the fine qualities of his father. His father had one of the nicest minds of anybody I ever knew and the boy is a good deal like him. You know who he is, perhaps, now--the boy?

M: Um hm.

H: Well, the father and classmate is one of my best friends. I can't tell you much about this boy. You could find out more about him, but I was very fond of his father who was beyond reproach in every way. That's all.

M: Okay. How about Mr. and Mrs. Cyril [Francis] Damon?

H: I just don't know much about the Damons at all. I think they lived down on that big estate where the big trees are [Moanalua] and I just never happened to know any of them.

M: Okay, we'll skip that group. Let's see. Mr. and Mrs. Alan [S.] Davis?

H: I'm ashamed to say that I forget about them. He was a very good man but I can't remember about him now.

M: I think I'm going to be able to interview him, so I'll probably get that all straightened out. Mr. and Mrs. Harold Dillingham?

H: I almost never saw them, strange to say. I knew the other brother very well.

M: You did?

H: Yes.

M: Which brother do you mean?

H: Well, Walter. I knew him quite well, but the one you speak of now, he almost never came around. I don't know anything about him.

M: When you say Walter, you mean the one that's married to Louise [Gaylord Dillingham] and lived down on Diamond Head? That one?

H: Yes. Yes, I know him quite well and, by the way, I've got something about him which I've always intended to read. Have you, at your [Walumull] Foundation, facilities for reproducing?

M: Yeh.

H: Well, I will give it to you in case. If you want to keep it, I'd like to have a reproduction of it because I haven't read it yet. Somebody gave it to me. I was quite a friend of Walter's. I'd like to read it sometime. I have somebody to read it to me.

M: Sure. Well, I could just take it and reproduce it and mail it back to you.

H: You will return it to me.

M: Sure. (recorder turned off and on again)

H: She had trailed a great deal and Walter would be there alone. My wife was quite a rider and used to enjoy going out. He would let her ride his best polo ponies, his stallions and so forth. He liked the girls but my wife was not the type he generally liked--she was intellectual --but he liked her too and they were good friends.

We would come back here after the war--after Pearl Harbor--and we always stopped at that hotel down on the beach, right on the beach. I've forgotten it. It's still there.

M: Royal Hawaiian?

H: Oh no. The one that's open-air where you eat right next to the water.

M: Moana?

H: Oh no, that isn't it.

M: Halekulani?

H: Halekulani! Well, Walter would come down and have breakfast with us and always bring my wife white orchids. While I say she's intellectual, he liked her and I was perfectly willing to have him like her. He would come every morning to have breakfast with us when we were in town. We came several times after the war.

M: After you'd gone back to Washington.

H: After we'd gone back to Washington, yes, we came and visited here.

M: When did you come back to stay?

H: Four years ago when they built this place [Arcadia Retirement Residence] we came back on account of my daughter. I never shared Walter's liberal views about the ladies (Lynda laughs) but, otherwise, we were very much in accord. I liked his boldness. In those days there were the Big Five and he didn't belong to it, so he'd fight them all collectively or singly and they had a wholesome respect for him. When I wanted to do anything that affected

the community, I always talked to him first in respect to the community. And the first thing they'd say, "Well now, what did Walter say?" before they'd want to talk. Well, I got so that I would always say, "I haven't talked to Walter yet about it," in order to get their unbiased opinion. But they had a wholesome respect for him and he'd fight them singly or collectively. My wife and I were both riders and so we rode with him a good deal.

M: Did you play polo?

H: I did not play polo, no. I was not a polo player. When we would come back, he'd always come down to the Halekulani to have breakfast with us when we were in town.

M: When did you first meet him?

H: When I first came to town in 1930. He came to see me right away and we both liked horses and I liked his way of doing business. In those days the little railroad shipped a lot of freight out for the Army and, of course, while I liked him it was my business to watch him. I watched anybody that had business with the Army, but I never saw him try to get a single cent out of the Army or out of the government. He was a loyal and perfectly square-shooter. I watched him in a business way all the time. He was pretty darned good that way. He was a patriotic citizen. Well, he was a keen fighter. Any of the Big Five would tell you that.

This will interest you. You perhaps know the Walkers here. Well, one of these Walkers is Walter's illegitimate son. I'd been here a year and Walter spoke one day of having given this fellow two polo ponies and I said to him, "Who is this fellow that you've given two polo ponies to and why did you give them to him?" He said, "Don't you know?" I said, "No, I don't know." "Well," he said, "I believe you." He took my word for things. "Well," he said, "that speaks awfully well for Honolulu." He said, "That fellow's my son." Nobody had ever told me that and I had been here a year. No gossip ever came to me about that fellow being Walter's illegitimate son and I think it's fine.

M: Uh huh.

H: He was, I guess, received every place. There was never any question about it. Walter had given him two polo ponies. I think it's fine and very interesting. But nobody carried the bad news to me. Nobody. I don't suppose to my wife [either] or she probably would have mentioned it. It's different from most towns that way.

M: Yeh, take things more . . .

H: Yes. I didn't mind his liking my wife. I was glad he did. (laughter) Well, go ahead. I got off the subject.

M: Let's see. Dowsetts. Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Dowsett.

H: Oh, I don't know anything of interest about them.

M: Okay.

H: I've forgotten. There was but I've forgotten.

M: Dyson. Harold Dyson?

H: He was a plantation manager but he was not communicative. I never talked much about it to him. See, I was interested in plantation managers because they knew the feelings of the Japanese. I perhaps told you last time about that, that nobody in town except--now I've lost his name again--the one man knew whether the young Japanese would be loyal or not. This man was the chairman of the board of regents of the University [of Hawaii] and he was the head of one of the big trust companies here and he and his wife had lost their only child and they had young people there and he knew, but nobody in town knew whether the Japanese would be loyal to the emperor or to America--the young Japanese. Even Walter didn't know. He said, "My chauffeur, who's been mine for twenty years, will save my life but whether he'll save Louise's life, I don't know. It's hard to realize it." So I went around and talked to the plantation managers and Dyson. His widow is here in the building now. I don't know anything about him. [See p.30]

M: Okay. Oh, I just remembered. (recorder turned off and on again) Okay, let's go on now. Farrington. Joseph [Rider] Farrington? Let's see, he was . . .

H: Oh, I can't add anything about him. Most everybody knew him and I knew him, of course, and he was fairly austere and friendly and everything, had everything in appearance. Now wait a minute. This is Joseph. Wait a minute. Are there two Farringtons there?

M: Well, let's see. Yeh. Well, there's Mrs. Wallace [Rider] Farrington, who was the mother of Joseph, and then you've got Joseph Farrington.

H: Now wait a minute. What does it say about Joe Farrington?

M: Vice-president and general manager, Honolulu Star-Bulletin;

influential Republican senator.

H: I'm trying to think of. . . . Who is the man who owned this place here [Arcadia], where this building is? Do you remember?

M: [Walter Francis] Frear.

H: Oh, I'm thinking of Mr. Frear for a minute. Oh, Joe Farrington. Yes, I knew him and quite well.

M: How did you know him, through the newspaper thing?

H: Well, I knew him because he belonged to the same college fraternity that I belonged to and when I came here, he and some of the rest of them organized a dinner for me and we had the dinner and he was friendly and cordial. And then, when I went back to Washington, he was there and he came around to the house. We had him to the house but only socially. But I thought he was an able, honest man and knew his business, but I can't tell you much more except that he was friendly and I thought he was a good citizen. I can't tell you anything particular about him.

M: What fraternity was that?

H: Beta Theta Pi. I didn't like his wife. She was a newspaper woman who captured him when he was a student in college and she was ambitious and, I thought, unscrupulous. I think she's still alive, back here now. [Elizabeth Pruett Farrington]. But he was quite a different character and she was pretty tough. Joe was very much of a gentleman and an able fellow.

M: Okay. Did you know the Frears?

H: Did I know them?

M: Um hm.

H: Only socially. I came to this house when they were here. They didn't entertain very highly but a few people were here. And there was a club called, I think, the Social Science Club which discussed matters of social science and I was an honorary member because I was commander here and we met here two or three times. I liked him very much.

M: When you were here, what was your full title?

H: Well, I first was the commander of the division at Schofield, and then I came down here and was the commander of

the Hawaiian department.

M: Department of the Army?

H: Yes, the Hawaiian department. Yes. And I would have been in command of the whole thing, as Walter Short was, when the Japanese came if I hadn't gotten too old--got up to sixty-four that same year. I fortunately was taken out and Walter Short came in and suffered.

M: Um, I see. I just wanted to be sure I had the right title for you.

H: Yes. I was commanding general of the Hawaiian department at that time, yes.

M: Okay. Why did they call it department?

H: Well, the Army called the major subdivisions departments and this was a department. There were nine departments on the Mainland and this was a department and I think it was a choice department. It was the best thing the War Department had to give and I was fortunate in getting it when I came. It was the best gift the War Department had except to be chief of staff of the Army. At that time they were General Marshall and General MacArthur.

M: MacArthur.

H: And they were completely out of my class. If it had been offered to me I wouldn't have taken it because they were so much better than I was. I knew them as young men quite well. I got this job here, which was the best job they had to give outside of the chief of staff, so I happened to be here. I also was fortunate enough to get out (Lynda laughs) because whoever is captain of the ship when it goes on the rocks, no matter what the circumstances are, he's out of luck. So Short was out of luck. All right, go ahead.

M: Here's some names I don't think we need to go into.

H: Pardon me.

M: Yeh.

H: This wife of Joe Farrington's tried to get control of the newspaper after Joe died. I don't think she ever achieved it. They kept her out some way or other. I think she really was entitled to the newspaper but they managed to keep her from getting control of it. There was some shady

business, I think, to keep her from getting it. Nobody liked her, apparently. All right, go ahead.

M: Okay. How about Reverend and Mrs. Henry [Pratt] Judd?

H: Well, like all the Judds, they were good people. That's all I can say about them. I can't tell you much in detail about them.

M: Okay.

H: I've forgotten what Henry's specialty was. Wasn't he once governor?

M: No, Henry was a minister, apparently.

H: He was what?

M: A minister. It says, "Associate secretary, Hawaiian Evangelical . . ."

H: I can't remember anything about him. Albert [Francis Judd] was the only one I knew well of the Judds.

M: Yeh, he was manager of the Bishop Estate.

H: Albert was?

M: Um hm.

H: Yes, I knew him quite well.

M: Do you remember any good stories about him?

H: I remember this all right. Do you just want a story?

M: Yeh.

H: The day after I came here, I went to call on the governor, which was a custom, at noon and the office was closed. In those days they opened very early and closed at one o'clock, so I called on the governor at noon and I didn't want to go back at twelve-thirty so I stopped at the [Bishop] Museum and Albert was running the museum in those days. I happened to run into him. He was quite pleased that the new general was interested in the museum. Oh, I had looked it up, you know, and I could talk about it. I told him of my ambition to see the museum and so forth, and what fine work they had done, and he was quite pleased so we became good friends right away. My wife was interested in such things and we walked around with him and he

showed us a lot about the country, like the pits. There are some in the hills back of Punahou School that the nobles would dig about the size of this rug and would say to one of the native men, "Now you fill this with sandalwood by the time the China ship comes in. I'm going to sell it to the Chinamen. If you don't, you're going to be knocked on the head." There're a number of them around. That was the method of getting the natives to get out sandalwood. And there were some of those things. Things like that, you know. So I got to know him quite well and he knew all about the plants and everything like that, besides all of the things he had in his museum.

So we stopped there and he thought that I was just wonderful because I knew all about his museum before I came here. Well then later, when I was in command, we were building a new water tower over there at the army camp on the Big Island. The high ground happened to be on the land of the Bishop Estate, right next to army land, and so we had a lease on that little piece of ground there. We had to build this new water tank to replace the old one. We got about halfway through and our lease ran out. We had to renew it and Albert thought that was a good time to squeeze some more money out of the government and I didn't want to pay any more money than we had been paying.

So I wrote him a letter which seemed to say that we would pay their own price, but didn't say that. But it fooled him so he laid off on the thing, you know. And when the time came to renew the lease, we had the water tower all completed and had a fait accompli. (Lynda laughs) I negotiated him. He couldn't squeeze me because the tower was finished. Well, he said, "Well, what about this letter?" "Well," I said, "Albert, read that letter carefully." He read it. He said, "You win." (laughter) And that was all there was to it.

But I fooled him on that letter. He laughed about it afterwards and so did I, but I always was tickled that I fooled him with this letter which seemed to say that I would agree to his terms, but I didn't. (laughter) We were very good friends.

M: Oh, that's a good one. He wasn't miffed at you about it.

H: He wasn't miffed about it, no, because I'd pulled the wool over his eyes by writing a letter which seemed to be perfectly frank and open but wasn't. (laughter) Things like that.

M: Yeh. Well, that's interesting. Let's see. How about Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Kemp?

H: Now wait a minute.

M: He was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court here.

H: About all I can tell you about him: he had a sparkling, red-headed wife. (laughter) I liked them both, that's all. Go ahead.

M: Clifford Kimball. He was the owner of the Halekulani [Hotel].

H: I can't tell you. I forget.

M: Okay. Mr. and Mrs. Addison [Erwin] Kirk?

H: No.

M: David Larsen?

H: Was he a doctor?

M: No, this is the vice-president of C. Brewer [& Company].

H: No.

M: How about Nils [P.] Larsen. He's the doctor.

H: Nothing, except he was outstanding as a doctor and a good man and has a son who, I think, has just come back here, retired from the Army. The son is called Swede Larsen [Lieutenant General Stanley Robert Larsen], who everybody liked at West Point and in the Army and has done very well in the Army and decided to come back here. He's perhaps on some duty, but he's about to retire and come here to live. He's a good man. That's all. [See p. 30]

M: Okay. Reverend Horace [H.] Leavitt?

H: No.

M: Oren [E.] Long?

H: No.

M: Mr. and Mrs. Hans L'Orange?

END OF SIDE 1/2ND TAPE

H: . . . to be grown here in emergencies to supply food for the Army if we were cut off, you know, by seas. (long pause) That's about all.

M: Okay. Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Lowrey.

H: One of the top citizens, one we could depend upon in the event of an emergency of any kind. We rated him very highly. The whole Lowrey family were that kind of people. We felt that we could call on them in the event of war to do most anything we wanted them to do.

M: Uh huh. The father was president of Lewers & Cooke [Incorporated] and the son was vice-president.

H: Yes.

M: They really had that sewed up, didn't they?

H: Well, the father was the top man and the sons were good people and stood well. Let's see. There was a daughter [Martha Lowrey] married to Jimmy [James Mullaby] Greenwell.

M: It says Martha here.

H: Martha, yes. She was a fine young girl. I remember her quite well and Jimmy Greenwell I remember very well. Go ahead, please.

M: Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lyon.

H: No.

M: Mr. and Mrs. Robert McCorriston?

H: Nothing much, except that he was a top citizen and could be depended on in time of war to give everything to the government that we called on him to do. He was a very good man. That's all I can tell you right now.

M: How about George McEldowney? He was a forester, huh? You said, "Supervised Schofield planting and helped the Army."

H: Very much so.

M: What was the Schofield planting? Is this the vegetables and things that you were trying to grow?

H: Yes, but mostly trees, though. He could be depended upon to produce anything we needed in the way of timber, lumber, in the event of war and as much as though he were an army officer. We all knew him and admired him.

M: Well, did you have a regular tree farm going or something?

H: Yes. He raised many young trees and planted trees where they were needed. Did a lot of planting.

M: Where?

H: Around the edges of the. . . . Well, have you seen around Schofield?

M: Yeh.

H: Planting of these tall straight trees from Australia.

M: Eucalyptus?

H: Yes, which he produced and planted. Things like that. He was just a good forester, that's all, and we had entire confidence in him. Very good man. Otherwise, I can't tell you much about him.

M: Okay. Remember anything about the McInernys?

H: Yes. I stood very well with the McInernys because I was one of the few people who could tell them apart from the very first day.

M: They were brothers, William and James?

H: Yes. They both were in the [McInerny] store in those days and even Walter Dillingham, who was a boy with them and brought up with them, said he couldn't tell me how he knew them apart. It was a feeling. (Lynda laughs) He took me in there and introduced me and from the very first day that I saw them I could tell them apart. It was a trick. One of them had had his glasses repaired and right here there was a little bit of repair. They didn't put an entire new piece, they mended it and there was a tiny gold band there. That was William. (Lynda laughs) I spotted that. The word went around that the new general was smart because he could tell the McInernys apart, you know, and I thought it was good for the Army to have people think the general was smart, so I didn't tell anybody, even Walter Dillingham. The word went around he could tell the McInernys apart so everybody said, "Well, he's a smart boy." (laughter)

They liked me on that account too. They kowtowed to me every time I came into the store, and invited Mrs. Herron and myself to dinner right away.

M: They were both bachelors, right?

H: They were exactly alike to the last freckle, to the last wisp of a reddish-gray hair, you know. Just exactly. But one of them had this little band right there. That was William. (laughter) It helped the reputation of the Army

and so I kept it to myself. I'd say, "Good morning, Mr. William. Good morning, Mr. Jim" when I went in there.

M: That's good. Let's see. [Alfred] Lester Marks?

H: No.

M: Judge and Mrs. Edward Massee.

H: The name?

M: Massee. M-A S-S-E-E.

H: I've forgotten.

M: I'll skip over the Midkiffs because I'll be talking to them. [Reverend Takie] Okumura. Sounds kind of interesting.

H: Now wait a minute.

M: Christian missionary from Japan, founder of the New American Movement, whatever that was.

H: Well, let me think about him. (long pause) I can't say much about him except that he was the outstanding Japanese man in my time and I think that his advice to all the Japanese was to be loyal to the Americans. I was much impressed by him but I can't tell you anything else about him now. I was quite impressed by him as being an outstanding man.

M: I wonder if he's still alive.

H: Oh, I wouldn't think so.

M: He was older than you then.

H: He was a pretty old man then. He was pretty well along because I asked about him. He was quite a fellow.

M: Judge Peters?

H: No.

M: How about Governor [Joseph Boyd] Poindexter.

H: Hmm. (long pause) Well, he was a mousy little man. (Lynda laughs) My wife had to sit next to him at dinners and she finally hit on the subject of fishing and then he would talk, he had something to say, but that was the only

subject she ever got any conversation out of him on--on fishing-- (laughter) so she'd bring that up. The Army bamboozled him into declaring martial law right away [on December 7, 1941]. He should not have been bamboozled. He was led around by the nose by the Army.

M: You were commander, though.

H: Oh no, I wasn't the commander. I'd gone by that time, you see. I had gone but they went around there that afternoon and told him all kinds of things about the need for martial law. They didn't need it at that time--they did not, but he gave them all the power. The civilians should have retained the power. I mean, the civilian people were loyal here; they didn't need to be pushed around by the Army. I wouldn't have pushed them around, but they went in there and banged on the table and so forth about the dangers and all that and he, instead of saying, "Be quiet now, be quiet. What's the danger? Where are the Japanese?"--they'd been going, you know--he signed up.

Well anyway, that's what I think about him but he was a very nice man. I've said a good deal there but I hope it will not be published. (laughter) Of course he meant no harm. What I've told you I think kind of describes him. He was very kindly and I liked him but I don't think command was in him. Well, that's about all.

M: Okay. I'll be careful when I write this stuff up, you know. I'm not going to use anything that'll embarrass anybody.

H: He's got a living daughter some place that I don't want to burden unnecessarily. I don't know how to describe him when you write it up, except to say he was not militant or aggressive. I think you could describe him that way. He was not an aggressive man and not militant and he yielded his command to the Army perhaps unnecessarily early. Something like that. Perhaps unnecessarily soon because the Japs never came near this place again, you know--never did --and the civilians might just as well have run it.

M: Yeh. (laughs)

H: Which is treason with an army officer, of course.

M: Yeh, right. I think it's great that you look at it that way. Let's see. Rentons? George [Fullerton] Renton.

H: I don't know anything about him.

M: Okay. Mark Robinson?

H: No.

M: Ernest Ross.

H: No.

M: Guy Rothwell?

H: Spell it out, will you?

M: Rothwell. R-O-T-H-W-E L L.

H: Architect, wasn't he?

M: Yes.

H: Yeh. He just died recently. He was a kamaaina, an old-timer, and an excellent man; would have been very useful to the Army in time of war with much bidding to do. We leaned on him, thought he would be very useful in time of war. That's all.

M: Did you use him at all, though, while you were here?

H: As I said, I was not here. I don't know whether they used him or not.

M: Okay. Gustav Schaefer?

H: No.

M: Alvah [A.] Scott?

H: No.

M: Oscar Shepherd.

H: No.

M: Philip [E.] Spalding.

H: He was the head of one of the Big Five.

M: Um hm, C. Brewer [& Company].

H: Yes. Very cooperative. (long pause) That's enough.

M: (laughs) Okay. Stainbacks. [Ingram Macklin] Stainback.

H: I ought to know more about him but it escapes me right now. I can't think right now about him but I ought to know more

about him. I think he afterwards became governor but I'm not sure. [He was governor from 1942 to 1951.]

M: I don't know.

H: Does it say anything about him?

M: Lawyer, U.S. District Attorney.

H: I don't remember enough about him clearly to say anything. Go ahead.

M: Okay. Alva [E.] Steadman.

H: No.

M: Wilhelmina Tenney.

H: (long pause) Well, I suppose you know who she was.

M: Yeh.

H: Well, I can't add anything probably to what you know.

M: Okay. Mr. and Mrs. Wade [Warren] Thayer.

H: No.

M: George Torrey?

H: Oh, it's a shame but I can't. . . . He was a person of importance and I knew him quite well, but right now I can't remember anything about him.

M: The painter?

H: Oh yes. Yes. Nothing except that he charged five thousand dollars for a portrait.

M: Wow!

H: If you'd go to him and say you have two thousand dollars and that's all you had, he'd say, "Too bad." He wouldn't do it for less.

M: He must have been rather comfortable.

H: He was. He had been in New York a long time and he got five thousand there. Yes, I knew him quite well but he was not a force in any way in a military way, so I was not much interested. I knew him quite well.

M: Conrad Von Hamm?

H: I did not know him well.

M: Hermann [Valdemar] von Holt.

H: A very good citizen; we thought very dependable to give everything in time of war; with a very capable wife [Elizabeth Value von Holt] who would also be useful in time of war.

M: Okay. How about John Waterhouse?

H: I don't remember.

M: Alexander [Ross] Walker?

H: (long pause) An able citizen and very dependable in time of war; do anything that we wanted him to do. That's all.

M: Okay. When do you have to go? (recorder turned off and on again)

H: You got some more in the book?

M: We're just getting to the end here.

H: Oh, you're getting towards the end?

M: Yep. Let's see. Henry White?

H: Henry White. No, I don't remember anything.

M: Gaylord Wilcox?

H: No.

M: Charles Wilder?

H: No.

M: Mrs. Gerrit [P.] Wilder.

H: No. Society. Well-up.

M: Yeh. That about does it, I think. Oh, wait. Baroness Zur Helle.

H: Very wealthy and . . .

M: She was an Isenberg. [Helen Isenberg Zur Helle]

H: Yes. We did not know where she stood, whether her sympathies were with the Germans and, therefore, with the Japanese. She was a doubtful person.

M: Hm. Do you know any other Isenberg?

H: I didn't know them personally, but they were doubtful. Their sympathies were quite German and, therefore, we thought that they were with the Japanese.

M: Yeh, they were about the wealthiest German family, I guess, here.

H: Yes. Well, the Germans were pretty doubtful. We didn't know what they'd do. We didn't think they were very Americanized.

M: Hm.

H: Wait just a minute, will you? I think I've got something else here if I can find it. I think I've got a list of people we invited to my daughter's wedding. She married soon after we left here. That might bring back some memories if I can put my finger on that. It's in the other room there.

M: Okay. (counter at 373)

END OF INTERVIEW

Re-transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen

NOTE: p. 2 General Herron "was apparently overdosed with anesthesia and affected by it for a long time," according to Mrs. R.W. Ripple, his daughter.

p. 6 Mrs. Ripple says that "the cook and houseboys were in the Philippines" and that General Herron "had a striker whose duties were to drive and take care of General Herron's own car, and employed two Japanese girls for housework, cooking, et cetera, while in Hawaii."

p. 11 Aina Wodehouse Olsmith, daughter of Annie Leialoha Cleghorn and Hay Wodehouse, was raised by Mr. and

Mrs. Louis von Tempsky after her mother died. Her father was Mrs. von Tempsky's brother, so she was Armine von Tempsky's cousin.

p. 16 The person referred to is Charles Reed Hemenway, chairman of the board of regents at the University of Hawaii, 1910-40. According to Mrs. Ripple, General Herron "commissioned to active duty an ROTC University of Hawaii graduate of Japanese ancestry--the first time it had been done. General Herron was much honored and loved by the Japanese community here because he had gone on record as believing in their loyalty, and backed this up by not including anti-sabotage measures in the event of attack, as well as by the ROTC commission."

p. 21 Nils P. Larsen is not the father of Lieutenant General Stanley Robert Larsen, whose parents are George F. and Agnes Anderson Larsen.

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THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.